

SENATE BILL 1237

By Gilmore

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 3;  
Title 4 and Title 49, relative to the state office of  
racial equity.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 21, is amended by adding  
the following as a new part:

**4-21-1101.** There is created the state office of racial equity to:

(1) Evaluate structures of support for racially diverse populations, particularly in  
light of the disparities in health outcomes that include, but are not limited to, the  
following:

- (A) Structures that currently exist in this state;
- (B) Models that have succeeded in other jurisdictions;
- (C) Policy changes this state should consider or efforts to support policy  
changes;
- (D) Tools the state can provide to communities; and
- (E) Economics, housing, health care, and access to credit;

(2) Review current state and federal law on hate speech and freedom of speech  
and consider:

- (A) Changes to state law that would facilitate prosecuting harassment,  
hate speech, and other bias-motivated crimes; and
- (B) Changes to state law necessary to ban similarly incendiary flags and  
other such images from being displayed in places that receive state funding; and

(3) Study and present options for encouraging and training citizens from diverse, marginalized, or underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in this state to run for and serve in public office at local, state, and federal levels of government.

**4-21-1102.** As part of the training conducted in accordance with § 4-21-1101(3), the office of racial equity shall determine:

- (1) What type of organization should conduct the training;
- (2) If there is grant funding available to support the training; and
- (3) If there is an existing program in this state that could be replicated to carry out the training.

**4-21-1103.** The governor shall appoint an executive director of the office of racial equity, who shall hire and supervise other staff as may be necessary for the office to carry out its duties.

**4-21-1104.** The state office of racial equity is administratively attached to the Tennessee human rights commission, but for all other purposes other than administration is considered independent. All appropriate agencies of state government shall provide assistance to the office upon request.

**SECTION 2.** This act takes effect July 1, 2021, the public welfare requiring it.